तव कथामृतं तप्तजीवनम्
tava kathāmṛtaṁ tapta-jīvanam

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Don't Artificially Imitate

His Divine Grace A.C. Bhaktivedanta Swami Prabhupada

Many people come to us saying, "Swamiji, my position is so troublesome," but as soon as we suggest the medicine, they will not accept it. This means that people want to manufacture their own medicine. Why do we go to a physician if we want to treat ourselves? People want to accept only what they think is palatable.

Although we are suggesting that this body is useless and is a form of contamination, we are not recommending that it be abused. We may use a car to carry us to work, but this does not mean that we should not take care of the car. We should take care of the car for it to carry us to and fro, but we should not become so attached to it that we are polishing it every day. We must utilize this material body in order to execute Krishna consciousness, and to this end we should keep it fit and healthy, but we should not become too attached to it. That is called *yukta-vairāgya*. The body should not be neglected. We should bathe regularly, eat regularly, and sleep regularly in order to keep mind and body healthy. Some people say that the body should be renounced and that we should take some drugs and abandon ourselves to intoxication. But this is not a yoga process. Krishna has given us nice food — fruits, grains, vegetables, and milk — and we can prepare hundreds and thousands of nice preparations and offer them to the Lord. Our process is to eat *kṛṣṇa-prasāda* and to satisfy the tongue in that way. But we should not be greedy and eat dozens of *samosās*, sweetballs, and *rasagullās*. No. We should eat and sleep just enough to keep the body fit, and no more. It is stated,

> *yuktāhāra-vihārasya yukta-ceṣṭasya karmasu*
> *yukta-svapnāvabodhasya yogo bhavati duḥkha-hā*

> He who is temperate in his habits of eating, sleeping, working, and recreation can mitigate all material pains by practicing the yoga system. (Bg. 6.17)

Although we should minimize our eating and sleeping, we should not attempt this too rapidly, at the risk of becoming sick. Because people are accustomed to eating voraciously, there are prescriptions for fasting. We can reduce our sleeping and eating, but we should remain in good health for spiritual purposes. We should not attempt to reduce eating and sleeping too rapidly or artificially; when we advance we will naturally not feel pain due to the reduction of these natural bodily processes. In this respect, Raghunath Das Goswami offers a good example. Although a very rich

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man's son, Raghunath Das left his home to join Lord Chaitanya Mahaprabhu. Because he was the only son, Raghunath Das was very beloved by his father. Understanding that his son had gone to Jagannath Puri to join Lord Chaitanya, the father sent four servants with money to attend him. At first, Raghunath accepted the money, thinking, "Oh, since my father has sent all this money, I will accept it and invite all the *sannyāsīs* to feast."

After some time, however, the feasts came to an end. Lord Chaitanya Mahaprabhu then inquired from His secretary, Swarup Damodar, "Nowadays I don't receive any invitations from Raghunath. What has happened?"

"That is because Raghunath has stopped accepting his father's money."

"Oh, that is very nice," Chaitanya Mahaprabhu said.

"Raghunath was thinking, 'Although I have renounced everything, I am still enjoying my father's money. This is hypocritical.' Therefore he has told the servants to go home and has refused the money."

"So how is he living?" Chaitanya Mahaprabhu inquired.

"Oh, he's standing on the steps of the Jagannath temple, and when the priests pass him on their way home, they offer him some *prasāda*. In this way, he is satisfied."

"This is very nice," Chaitanya Mahaprabhu commented.

Regularly going to the Jagannath temple, Lord Chaitanya Mahaprabhu would see Raghunath standing on the steps. After a few days, however, He no longer saw him there. Therefore the Lord commented to His secretary, "I no longer see Raghunath standing on the temple steps."

"He has given that up," Swarup Damodar explained. "He was thinking, 'Oh, I am standing here just like a prostitute, waiting for someone to come and give me food. No. I don't like this at all.' "

"That is very nice," Chaitanya Mahaprabhu said, "but how is he eating?"

"Every day he is collecting some rejected rice from the kitchen and is eating that."

To encourage Raghunath, Chaitanya Mahaprabhu one day visited him. "Raghunath," the Lord said, "I hear that you are eating very palatable food. Why are you not inviting Me?"

Raghunath did not reply, but the Lord quickly found the place where he kept the rice, and the Lord immediately took some and began to eat it.

"Dear Lord," Raghunath implored, "please do not eat this. It is not fit for You."

"Oh, no? Why do you say it's not fit for Me? It's Lord Jagannath's *prasāda*!"

Lord Chaitanya Mahaprabhu enacted this pastime just to discourage Raghunath from thinking, "I am eating this miserable, rejected rice." Through the Lord's encouragement, Raghunath Das Goswami reduced his daily quantity of food until he was finally eating only one pat of butter every other day. And every day he was also bowing down hundreds of times and constantly chanting the holy names — *saṅkhyā-pūrvaka-nāma-gāna-natibhiḥ kālāvasānī-kṛtau*.

Although this is an excellent example of minimizing all material necessities, we should not try to imitate it. It is not possible for an ordinary man to imitate Raghunath Das Goswami, who was one of the six Goswamis, a highly elevated associate of Lord Chaitanya Mahaprabhu Himself. Each one of the six Goswamis displayed a unique example of how one can advance in Krishna consciousness, but it is not our duty to imitate them. We should just try to follow, as far as possible, in their footsteps. If we immediately try to become like Raghunath Das Goswami by imitating him, we are sure to fail, and whatever progress we have made will be defeated. Therefore the Lord says *(Bg. 6.16)* that there is no possibility of one's becoming a *yogī* if one eats too much or too little.

The same moderation applies to sleep. Presently I may be sleeping ten hours a day, but if I can keep myself fit by sleeping five hours, why sleep ten? As far as the body is concerned, there are four demands — eating, sleeping, mating, and defending. The problem with modern civilization is that it is trying to increase these demands, but they should be decreased instead. Eat what we need and sleep when we need and our health will be excellent. There is no question of artificial imitation.

— Excerpted from chapter 4 of *Path of Perfection*. Bhaktivedanta Book Trust. Los Angeles.

Messenger from Vaikuntha

Srila Bhaktisiddhanta Saraswati Prabhupada

Question: Everything I know is based on my experience of this world. So how will I know about anything that is transcendental?

Srila Prabhupada: It is true that in our present state it is very difficult for us to perceive something transcendental. But it is also true that there is a way of knowing these things. If we have friends and relatives in a faraway place then a messenger will bring us their news.

Question: But the messenger does not come to everyone, does he?

Srila Prabhupada: Those who are not visited by the messenger are very unfortunate. But there is one thing — you will see that the messenger will definitely bring the news to those who are really hankering for it.

Question: How will we recognize the messenger from Vaikuṇṭha? How will we know which message is true and which is not?

Srila Prabhupada: If my prayer is sincere, then by the mercy of the omniscient God everything will be revealed. One who wants to be educated will only come to know an educated person by the kindness of the latter. The Supreme Lord, who is in my heart, will help me in every way; all I have to do is depend on him.

In this world there are two ways of gathering knowledge. One is to know things by experiencing them in this world. Another is to understand that the experience of this world is incomplete and insufficient. Therefore, to gather the knowledge that belongs to another world we have to completely surrender ourselves to a saint who has descended from that world and hear from him. ❁

— From page 93 of *Prabhupada Saraswati Thakur.* Mandala Publishing Group. Eugene, Oregon. 1997.

Spiritual Novels

Srila Thakur Bhaktivinode

Question: Can a living entity be benefited by reading the topics of Hari written in the form of novels?

Nowadays people love to read novels. Our duty is to teach the science of devotional service little by little through novels, like administering a dose of homeopathic medicine. By injecting small amounts of spiritual knowledge into the hearts of the materialists, their hearts will become faithful to devotional service. ❁ (*Sajjana-toṣaṇī* 10.12)

— *Śrī Bhaktivinoda Vāṇī Vaibhava* 25.11, compilation and questions by Sundarananda Vidyavinode. Translated by Bhumipati Das, Published by Iswara Das and Touchstone Media. Vrindavan. 2002.

The Washerman, the Weaver and the Florist

Part One

In Lalita-mādhava *(9.169) Srimati Nava Vrinda Devi offered the following prayer to Krishna:*

hata-rājakīya-rājakaṁ
vāyaka-vāra-dāyakaṁ devam
dhṛta-damanaka-dāmānaṁ
sudāma-dayitaṁ namasyāmi

To the Supreme Personality of Godhead, who killed Kamsa's washerman, who blessed the weaver, and who accepted a garland from His dear devotee, the florist Sudama, I offer my respectful obeisances.

Garga-saṁhitā, *canto five, chapters five and six give a description of Krishna's pastimes when He first entered Mathura:*

To please the cowherd boys, Lord Krishna spoke the following words to a washerman and cloth-dyer who was frantically going on the king's road. "O noble hearted friend, give these beautiful garments to us. If you give them, you will get a great gift in return. Of this there is no doubt."

Inflamed by Lord Krishna's words as fire is inflamed by ghee, the washerman, who was a great demon and a servant of Kamsa, spoke to Krishna in the middle of the road.

The washerman said, "O proud wearers of *kaupīnas*, did Your fathers or grandfathers ever wear clothes like these? O uncivilized people who live in the forest, if you value your lives then flee from this city! If you do not then I will have you put in jail for stealing my garments.

As soon as these words were spoken, with the edge of His hand Lord Krishna playfully beheaded the washerman.

An effulgence left the washerman's dead body and entered the dark cloud of Lord Krishna. At once the washerman's assistants dropped the great treasury of opulent garments and fled in all directions, just as monsoon clouds flee with the coming of autumn. Calmly standing there, Krishna and Balaram took what they liked from the pile of garments. The cowherd boys took what they wanted, and other boys walking on the king's road, unaware of what had happened, also took from the pile of beautiful clothes as Krishna and Balaram placidly looked on.

Then a weaver noticed Krishna and Balaram, and at once he dressed Them in beautiful and colorful garments. He also dressed the other cowherd boys. Then with great devotion he gazed at Lord Krishna. Pleased with Him, Krishna gave the weaver a transcendental form like His own. Then Lord Balaram gave him transcendental strength, handsomeness, and opulence like His own.

Then, accompanied by Balaram and the cowherd boys, Sri Krishna, the son of Nanda, went to the florist Sudama's home.

When he saw Krishna and Balaram, Sudama at once stood up and then bowed down with folded hands. Placing Them on a flower throne, he stuttered words choked with emotion.

Sri Sudama said, "O Lord, now that you have come, my family, my home, and my birth in this world have all become blessed. I think seven generations of ancestors in the families of my father, mother, and wife have now gone to Vaikunthalok. You are both the perfect Supreme Personality of Godhead, who have taken birth in King Yadu's dynasty to remove the earth's burden. I offer my respectful obeisances to You, the two controllers of all the worlds, who have now come to my very poor home. After speaking these words, the florist offered Krishna and Balaram many nectar flower ornaments filled with the humming of bees. Then he bowed down to offer his respects.

Seeing that great abundance of flowers, Lord Krishna, the Supreme Personality of Godhead, gave them to His cowherd boy friends. Smiling, He spoke the following words, "You will have great devotion for My lotus feet. You will have the company of My devotees. Even in this world you will have a transcendental form like My own."

Then Lord Balaram gave him the gift of eternally increasing handsomeness and opulence. Krishna and Balaram then stood up and left.

— From an English translation of *Śrī Garga-saṁhitā* by Sri Kusakratha Das. Krishna Library. Culver City, California. 1990.

Fire in Vraja

Srila Rupa Goswami

mad-viśleṣa-jvalana-paṭalī-jvālayā jarjarāṅgāḥ
sarve tasmin nidhana-padavīṁ śākhino 'py āśrayiṣyan
gopī-netrāvali-vigalitair bhūribhir bāṣpa-vārāṁ
pūrais teṣāṁ yadi niravadhir nābhiṣeko 'tariṣyat

[While in Mathura, Krishna said to Uddhava:] If they were not always drenched by a flood of tears from the *gopīs'* eyes, all of Vraja's trees would have burned in a great fire of separation from Me. They would have walked on a pathway that leads to death.

— *Uddhava Sandeśa*, text 9. Translation by Sri Kusakratha Das. Krishna Library. Culver City, California.

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